Bad Dreams

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by ficsofthecavern

Summary

Nightmares have been nothing new in Will’s life. They are an ever-present dark buzz that slumbers in the back of his mind during the day and crawls out at night when he is most vulnerable. They leave him sweating, trembling, his heart elevated and lungs gasping for air.

Notes

Another popular Twitter drabble that I'm posting here

Nightmares have been nothing new in Will's life. They are an ever-present dark buzz that slumbers in the back of his mind during the day and crawls out at night when he is most vulnerable. They leave him sweating, trembling, his heart elevated and lungs gasping for air.

Before, his dreams had been a fight with himself, as he kept his dark desires at bay. Avoiding and fighting with the black antlered shadow that followed him, his antlered beast his protector and guide.

The dream he is experiencing now, at this moment, is something much different. The sights, sounds, and smells are so vivid it doesn't feel like a dream at all, as if he was back there on the cliffs, then in the water, and finally on the shore.

His beast lies in the wet sand, feathered head resting against a blood-soaked stomach, black feathers shimmering like oil under the moonlight, and his breathing is quick. The fear that runs Will's blood cold is not for his own life, and the tears that wash down his blood-stained cheek is from knowing he will have to live without a part of himself that he had just gained.

He lifts his head to the moon like a wolf, parts his jaws, and his scream pierces the night sky, guttural and loud.

The sound shakes the boat floor under Hannibal's feet and brings him immediately to attention. It is a scream filled with fear, but not like a scream that would come from one of his victims, begging for their life. It is a thick sound that comes from deep within the stomach, and low in the heart. It is filled with cold grief and shakes Hannibal to the core as the voice attached to the scream is Will's.

He abandons his post from the sails and rushes down into the cabin. Will's legs are thrashing in their shared bed and he is gasping for breath. Hannibal can smell the saltiness of his sweat, his distress in the air, and under the moonlight from the window, he can see the shine of tears that stain his face. He's clutching Hannibal's pillow in a death grip and is sobbing openly.

"Will," Hannibal calls out as he crawls up onto the bed. "Will, shh, it's alright," he murmurs, voice calm and steady. He brushes away Will's tears with his thumbs as he cradles Will's face in his hands, leaning down to press soft kisses into his damp hair. Hannibal pulls the pillow away from Will's tight grip, replaces it with his body, and Will instantly wraps his arms around him. Hannibal pulls his face into the crook of his neck and cards his fingers through his curls, down his nape, and holds his hand there. "You're alright, darling," Hannibal whispers. "You're safe. We're safe."

Hannibal can feel his shirt grow wet with Will's tears and he continues to tremble in his arms. Will hiccups once, twice, before he sniffs loudly and relaxes, shoulders lowering an inch as

he wakes up.

“Please...,” Will begs, his voice breaking, and he presses as close as he can to Hannibal’s chest, wants to be surrounded by his warmth. “Please tell me you’re alive.”

Hannibal licks his lips, and he feels a tightness in his chest, the red tethers surrounding his heart constricting from Will’s pain. “I’m here, darling,” he says and continues to massage the tight muscles of Will’s neck. “Listen to my heart beating, Will. I’m here.” Will whines and presses his ear to Hannibal’s chest immediately. Hannibal holds Will tight, ignoring the pain that throbs under the bandages of his wounds as he comforts his beloved. He rubs Will’s trembling back, coaxing him to calm down. “It was only a dream.”

“A pretty fucking bad one,” Will muffles into Hannibal’s chest, but his shakes have finally stopped.

“Would you like to have a conversation about it?” Hannibal asks and Will snorts. He pulls away from Hannibal and lifts a hand to rub his wet face, his long lashes wet with clinging tears. He looks up to Hannibal, as much as he can in the darkness, his eyes puffed and red. Hannibal smiles softly and tucks a curl of hair behind Will’s ear before pressing a soft kiss to his forehead. Will sighs and leans back forward, into the crook of Hannibal’s neck and nuzzles his skin.

“You didn’t survive the fall,” Will mumbles, giving another sniff to try and stop his dripping nose. “It was so *vivid* ,” Will’s voice cracks and he shuts his eyes tightly, trying to stop the fresh sting of tears at the corner of his eyes. When he takes in another breath to try and calm himself it’s shaky, and he groans out as if in pain, clutching Hannibal’s shirt.

Hanibal bites the inside of his cheek, forcing himself to be the calm guardian in Will’s time of need, though his heart pains. He knows deeply that neither of them would survive separation. It would have unleashed a beast onto the world as no one has seen before, leaving a trail of blood and viscera in his wake.

After a particularly hard swallow, he finds his voice and says, “Your imagination is indeed a vigorous one.” Will hums his agreement.

“It’s ugly.”

“No, Will,” Hannibal snaps. He tugs at Will’s hair, forcing him back so they can be face to face, and Will gasps as the sudden sting at the back of his head. “Every inch of you is beautiful,” Hannibal says with a fierceness in his voice that Will can’t help but smile at, warming at his words.

“Let’s go lower the sails. I sleep better when you’re here.”

Hannibal gives a quick nod, and his smile is filled with pride and warmth.

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